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EXDIS. CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PTER, ZI. US

SUBJECT: BRIEFING SENATOR JACKSON ON HOSTAGES

REF: (A) STATE 4385, (B) HARARE 551

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. AS A FOLLOW UP TO SENATOR JACKSON'S JANUARY 6 NSC MEETING, AF/S DIRECTOR SIMPSON AND ZIMBABWE DESK OFFICER MET WITH THE SENATOR ON JAN. 25 TO BRING HIM UP TO DATE ON DISCUSSION OF THE HOSTAGE CASE WITH THE SOUTH AFRICANS. (A SUGGESTION TO APPROACH THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAD BEEN MADE AT THE JAN. 6 MEETING REPORTED REFTEL A). SIMPSON TOLD JACKSON THAT SOUTH AFRICANS IN RESPONDING TO OUR REQUEST FOR INFORMATION HAD MADE THREE POINTS: (1) GOZ SECURITY FORCES HAVE EASED OFF THE SEARCH ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT HOSTAGES ARE DEAD; (2) ZIMBABWEANS, NEVERTHELESS, ARE ASSIDUOUSLY FOLLOWING UP ON ALL LEADS; (3) THE SOUTH AFRICANS PROMISED TO KEEP THEIR EARS TO THE GROUND AND THAT THEY WOULD PASS ANY SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION TO US. SIMPSON ALSO MADE THE POINT THAT THE SENSITIVITY OF THIS INFORMATION PRECLUDED OUR SHARING IT WITH THE FAMILIES. THE SENATOR ACCEPTED OUR RATIONALE AND STATED THAT HE HAD NO INTENTION OF DOING SO.

3. SIMPSON ALSO NOTED THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN ACCOUNT DIFFERED FROM OTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US (THE LATEST CID REPORT-- REF B) IN TWO CRITICAL AREAS, NAMELY THE FATE OF THE HOSTAGES - THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN SUGGESTS THAT ALL OR SOME ARE STILL ALIVE - AND THE CONTINUING ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF THE ZNA IN THE SEARCH AND RESCUE EFFORT. WHILE JACKSON IS GLAD THAT THE SEARCH IS CONTINUING, HE HAD SERIOUS RESERVATION ABOUT THE USE OF THE MILITARY, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF ITS METHODS EARLY IN THE SEARCH EFFORT. WE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IF THE TRIAL OF DABENGWA AND MASUKU DOES NOT FLUSH THE KIDNAPPERS OUT, IT WOULD BE A NEGATIVE AUGUR FOR THE PROBABLE FATE OF THE HOSTAGES. WE ALSO BRIEFED JACKSON ON THE CONGEN CAPE TOWN ENCOUNTER WITH "MR SMITH" AND OUR WISH TO SEE THE COLOR OF

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HIS MONEY AT THIS POINT.

4. JACKSON EXPRESSED-APPRECIATION FOR THE INFORMATION AND NOTED THAT HE CONTINUES TO FOLLOW THE CASE VERY CLOSELY. HE SAID THAT HE VISITED WITH THE ELLISES OVER THE HOLIDAYS AND BELIEVES THAT WHILE ALL ARE AGONIZING OVER THE FATE OF KEVIN AND BRETT, MR ELLIS APPEARS TO BE SUFFERING CONSIDERABLY. SHULTZ  
END OF MESSAGE

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